

WHAT I CLAIM IS:

- 1. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:
  - storing a plurality of information nodes;
  - providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a relative ordinal ranking with each of a set of said nodes under another of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
  - calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the ordinal ranking given to each of said nodes by each of a group of individual users; and
  - displaying said set of nodes under said parent node ordered as a function of the group ordinal ranking calculated.
- 2. A computerized method as in claim 1 wherein:
  - said method further includes providing a user interface enabling a user to select from different groups of users; and
  - wherein said step of calculating a group ordinal ranking, calculates the ordinal ranking as a function of the selected group based on the ordinal rankings given to nodes by users of the selected group.
- 3. A computerized method as in Claim 1 wherein there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy.
- 4. A computerized method as in Claim 3 wherein:
  - said user interface which allows users to associate an ordinal ranking with nodes, enables users to associate a separate ordinal ranking of one node under each of a plurality of said parent nodes; and
  - said calculating of a group ordinal ranking calculates a separate ranking for a said one node under each of said plurality of parent nodes.

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5. A computerized method as in Claim 3 further providing a user a hierarchy view expansion interface enabling users to selectively control which parent nodes are to have the nodes ranked under them displayed and which are not to have the parent nodes ranked under them displayed.

6. A computerized method as in Claim 5 wherein, when a first set of multiple parent nodes are displayed ranked under a given other parent node, the hierarchy view expansion interface allows a user to select to have nodes ranked under each of said first set of parent nodes be displayed at the same time, so as to create display of nodes which forms a hierarchical tree graph having multiple expanded branches.

7. A computerized method as in Claim 5 wherein the hierarchy view expansion interface allows a user to select to have the order in which nodes are displayed under parent nodes be determined by a set of one or more different ordering criteria, in which said group ordinal ranking is only one of the ordering criteria which a user can select to use for the ordering of nodes under a given parent node.

8. A computerized method as in Claim 7 wherein said ordering criteria from which a user can select includes at least one from the following set of criteria:

- date of nodes creation in outline;
- number of a certain type of votes which the node has received,
- the amount of a given class of user activity which has been recorded in association with the node, or
- the amount of change in a certain criteria associated with the node in a given period of time.

-9. A computerized method as in Claim 3 wherein:

- some of said parent nodes ranked under another parent node are statement nodes which make a statement; and

-some of said statement nodes are themselves parent nodes under which other statement nodes are ranked, which other statement node either support or oppose the statement made by their parent statement node.

- 10. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:
- storing a plurality of information nodes, at least some of which are link nodes containing links to other media;
  - providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
  - calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;
  - displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

- 11. A computerized method as in claim 10 wherein:
- said method further includes providing a user interface enabling a user to select from different groups of users; and
  - wherein said step of calculating a group ordinal ranking, calculates the ordinal ranking as a function of the selected group based on the values given to nodes by users of the selected group.

- 12. A computerized method as in Claim 10 wherein there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a ranked hierarchy.

- 13. A computerized method as in Claim 12 wherein:

-some of said link nodes are themselves parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked, which other nodes can include comments about the other media to which the links in their respective parent nodes point.

-14. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

-providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;

-displaying said set of nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

--there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under the which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy;

--when a first set of multiple parent nodes are displayed ranked under a given other parent node, the hierarchy view expansion interface allows a user to select to have nodes ranked under each of said first set of parent nodes be displayed at the same time, so as to create a display of nodes which forms a hierarchical tree graph having multiple expanded branches.

-15. A computerized method as in Claim 14 wherein said hierarchy view expansion interface allows a user to selectively control how many of the top ranking nodes under a selected parent node are to be shown in said display.

-16. A computerized method as in Claim 14 wherein the hierarchy view expansion interface allows a user to select to have the order in which nodes are displayed under parent nodes be determined by a set of one or more different ordering criteria, in which said group ordinal ranking is only one of the ordering criteria which a user can select to use for the ordering of nodes under a given parent node.

-17. A computerized method as in Claim 16 wherein said ordering criteria from which a user can select includes at least one from the following set of criteria:

- date of nodes creation in outline;
- number of a certain type of votes which the node has received;
- the amount of a given class of user activity which has been recorded in association with the node, or
- the amount of change in a certain criteria associated with the node in a given period of time.

-18. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

- storing a plurality of information nodes;
- providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
- calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;
- displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking;
- wherein:

--said method further includes providing a user interface enabling a user to select from different groups of users; and  
--wherein said step of calculating a group ordinal ranking, calculates the ordinal ranking as a function of the selected group based on said values given to nodes by users of the selected group.

-19. A computerized method as in Claim 18 wherein:

-there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy;  
-said user interface enabling a user to select from different groups of users, enables a user to select different sets of users for different parent nodes;  
-said calculating calculates said ordinal rankings under different parent nodes based on the different user groups selected such parent nodes, so that said displaying displays nodes under different parent nodes ranked according to the values selected for such nodes by different groups of users.

-20. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

-storing a plurality of information nodes;  
-providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;  
-calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;  
-displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking;  
-Wherein:

--there is a first node hierarchy comprised of a first plurality of said parent nodes under which other of said nodes are ranked by said

method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy;

--there is second hierarchy of comprised of a second of plurality parent nodes which are index heading nodes, each having an associated text, which index heading nodes are ordered alphabetically in said second hierarchy;

--said index heading nodes can have located under them in said second hierarchy:

---a set of one or more alphabetically ordered index heading nodes; and/or

---a set of one or more link nodes each providing a link to a node in said first hierarchy.

-21. A computerized method as in Claim 20, further including:

-providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said link nodes under one of said index heading nodes;

-calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of link nodes under said index heading node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;

-displaying said set of link nodes under said index heading node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

-22. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

-storing a plurality of information nodes;

-providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;

-calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;  
-displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking;

-Wherein:

--said method further includes providing a user interface enabling a user to select a time period which is sub-set of the time during which users have been selecting said values for nodes;  
--wherein said step of calculating a group ordinal ranking, calculates the ordinal ranking as a function of the rankings given to nodes by said group of user and as a function of the relationship of said rankings to said selected time period.

-23. A computerized method as in Claim 22 wherein:

-there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy;  
-said user interface enabling a user to select a time period, enables a user to select different such time periods for different parent nodes;  
-said calculating calculates the ordinal ranking under each of said different parent nodes as a function of the rankings given to nodes by said group of user and as a function of the relationship of said rankings to the time period selected for each such parent node.

-24. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

-storing a plurality of information nodes;  
-providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;



- calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;
- displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking;
- Wherein:

- there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy; and
- some of nodes which are ranked under other parent nodes have ranked in association with them a set of one or more action nodes, each of which action nodes provides a suggestion for collaborative action upon the action node's associated node; and
- said method further includes:

- providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said action nodes;
- calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of action nodes as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;
- displaying said set of action nodes in association the associated node ordered as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

-25. A computerized method as in Claim 24 wherein the display of said action nodes include links, which if clicked by a user, cause the method to automatically make the action they suggest.

-26. A computerized method as in Claim 24 wherein the said method further includes:

- automatically track actions taken by a user on a node having a set of associated action nodes; and
- automatically selecting said value selected by a user for a given action node as a function of said automatic tracking of actions.

- 27. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:
- storing a plurality of information nodes;
  - providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
  - calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;
  - displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.
  - providing a search user interface enabling a user to select a pattern and automatically search through said nodes to find a set of one or more nodes having a matching pattern;
  - displaying said set of matching nodes ordered as a function of their respective values of a certain collaborative activity performed on them by multiple users.
- 28. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:
- storing a plurality of information nodes;
  - providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
  - calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;

- displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking;
- providing a user interface for enabling a user to create and edit a message; and
- providing a user interface for enabling a user to select, as a groups, the users who have selected to associate a given set of one or more of said values with a given node, and to select to address message to said group.

- 29. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:
- storing a plurality of information nodes, at least some of which are chat thread nodes representing a thread in a threaded discussion,
  - providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under a selected one of a plurality of said nodes which functions as parent nodes, so that different users can rank a given chat thread under different parent nodes;
  - calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said nodes, including each of said chat thread nodes, under each parent node it has been ranked, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users; *and*
  - displaying said set of nodes, including said chat thread nodes, under the parent node they have been ranked as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

- 30. A computerized method as in claim 29 wherein:
- said method further includes providing a user interface enabling a user to select from different groups of users; and
  - wherein said step of calculating a group ordinal ranking, calculates the ordinal ranking as a function of the selected group based on the values given to nodes by users of the selected group.

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-31. A computerized method as in Claim 29 wherein:

- there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are also ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure of parent nodes which can be viewed as a hierarchy; and
- said user interface enables different users to rank a given chat thread under different parent nodes in different levels of said hierarchy.

-32. A computerized method as in Claim 31 further including providing a user interface enabling a user to select a parent node in said hierarchy and to select to have a combined chat thread list displayed in association with the selected parent node which displays chat threads which have been ranked under the selected parent node and any nodes which descend from the selected parent node.

-33. A computerized method as in Claim 32 further including:

- calculating a combined list ordinal ranking for each of said chat thread nodes listed under the selected parent node as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of said group of individual users under the selected parent node and its descendant nodes; *and*
- displaying said chat thread nodes in said combined chat thread list as a function of said calculated combined list ordinal ranking.

-34. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

- storing a plurality of information nodes;
- providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
- calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;

-displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

-Wherein:

--there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy; and further including:

---providing a hierarchy view interface enabling users to select a given parent node in said hierarchy and to select to have a combined sub-node list displayed in association with the selected parent node which displays sub-nodes which have been ranked under the selected parent node and sub-nodes which have been ranked under nodes which descend from the selected parent node in said hierarchy,

-calculating a combined list ordinal ranking for each of said sub-nodes listed in said combined sub-node list as a function of the values given to said sub-nodes by each of said group of individual users under the selected parent node and its descendant nodes; and

-displaying said sub-nodes in said combined sub-node list as a function of said calculated combined list ordinal ranking.

-35. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

-storing a plurality of information nodes;

-providing a user interface enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;

-calculating a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;

-displaying said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

-Wherein:

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--there are a plurality of said parent nodes under which other nodes are ranked by said method, including some parent nodes under which are ranked other of said parent nodes by said method, so as to create a data structure which can be viewed as a hierarchy; and  
--users are provided an edit interface enabling each of a plurality of users to selectively edit portions of media contained a selected node and to see edits which have been made to the selected node by other users.

-36. A computerized method as in Claim 35 further including:

- said edit interface enables each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of edits which have been made to the selected node; and
- further including
  - calculating an edit ordinal ranking for each of said edits made for the selected node as a function of the values given to said edits by each of said group of individual users; and
  - displaying said edits in a list ordered as a function of said calculated edit ordinal ranking.

-37. A computerized method of collaboratively ordering information comprising:

- storing a plurality of information nodes on a server computer;
- providing a user interface on a client computer enabling each of a plurality of users to associate a selected one of a plurality of values with each of a set of said nodes under another one of said nodes which functions as a parent node;
- calculating on a server computer a group ordinal ranking of each of said set of nodes under said parent node, as a function of the values given to said nodes by each of a group of individual users;
- displaying on said client computer said set of link nodes under said parent node as a function of said calculated ordinal ranking.

-further including:

- providing a user interface on a client computer allowing a user to define a quote occurring in media available at an address elsewhere on an internetwork than on said server computer, and an identification of said address;

- downloading from said address to said server said media and verifying if said quote occurs in it, and if so generating verification media which identifies that said quote occurred in said media; *and*

- providing a user interface on said client computer for enabling said user to insert said verification media into a node which can be stored in a ranked node on said server

-38. A computerized method depending from any one of the claims above wherein:

- said storing of information nodes and calculation of ordinal rank is done on a server computer; and

- said user selections and said user interfaces are provided, and said displaying of said nodes are performed on, a client computer connected to said server computer through a computer network.

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